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November 16, 2004

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary
 Department of Health and Human Services
 200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Lester M. Crawford, DVM, Ph.D., Acting Commissioner
 Food and Drug Administration
 5600 Fishers Lane
 Rockville, M.D. 20857

Dear Secretary Thompson and Acting Commissioner Crawford:

I encourage the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to help American consumers make sound dietary decisions by establishing descriptive claims for whole grains on food labels.

As you know, health experts recommend that Americans eat more food that contains whole grains. Nonetheless, consumption of whole grains is well below recommended daily intake. Unfortunately, consumers may be confused by the plethora of statements about grains (e.g., wheat, multi-grain) on foods that may mislead consumers into believing that the product contains whole grains, when in fact the foods do not. Establishing descriptive claims, including "excellent source," "good source," and "made with" for whole grain content will go a long way in helping consumers improve their diet by making better dietary choices and preventing diet-related diseases. Additionally, it will clear up confusion in the market place and give consumers greater confidence in the food label.

Importantly, providing greater information to consumers on whole grain content of foods is consistent with your "Consumer Health Information for Better Nutrition Initiative," which has as its central focus improving the public availability and consumer understanding of up-to-date scientific evidence on how dietary choices can affect health. I applaud the agency for this initiative but recognize that more can be done under FDA's current authority to help consumers improve their understanding of how their dietary choices may influence their health. I understand that the FDA is currently considering a petition (Docket No. 2004P-0223/CP1) requesting descriptive claims for whole grains on food labels. I encourage the agency to act favorably on this petition to permit such claims.

2004P-0223

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Thank you for your dedication and continued efforts to provide consumers with more and better information about foods to help Americans improve their health. If your staff has any questions about this request or require additional information, please have them contact Peggy Carlson in my office at (202) 224-0623.

Sincerely,



Judd Gregg
Chairman